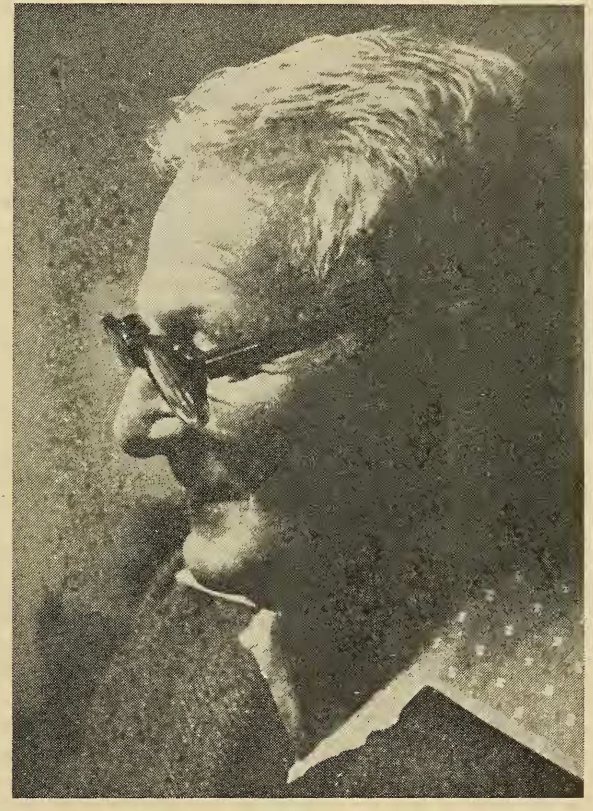
truth in the dictum " publish or perish " Gilbert Whitley ought to have been practically immortal ! At the close of his career the list of his published writings runs to well over 500 titles—research papers and monographs, contributions to encyclopaedias and the like, as well as popular natural history pieces in magazines and newspapers—and some of his writings are only now being printed. The sheer magnitude of the list precludes its addition to this memorial where only a few samples can be mentioned. One wonders when he found time for letter-writing though he very clearly did. Many friends and colleagues about the world must treasure spontaneous notes from him that are gems of mixed wisdom and whimsy.



The compiler of a complete Whitley bibliography will face a daunting task, not because of the mass of his own pieces, for he was meticulous in keeping his census up-to-date, but because he became a sort of resident sage, albeit a most modest one, on matters relating to Australian fishes. Anything unusual found at the Sydney Fish Markets or by fishermen along the coast, reports of sharks and so forth, would be referred to him by journalists. In the popular view he was *the authority* to be consulted, and quoted.

This writer lacks the expertise to comment on the quality of the ichthyological work but is certainly impressed by the quantity. Some 340 of Whitley's published works deal with the subject ! If one consults the census of fish species recorded from Australia to the year 1964 (*Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.*, 89, 1964, pp. 32–60) it will be found that of the 2,447 names more than 320 of them were introduced by Gilbert Whitley.

No doubt many of those new names were fixed on material collected during his own travels. Travel was an activity vastly to Gilbert's taste and much of it he managed in his own time and at his own expense. Naturally gregarious, he enjoyed science congresses and excursions and made it his business to secure what came his way for the Museum collections. His first annual holidays in 1923 were spent at Lord Howe Island gathering insects with Anthony Musgrave. With longer periods of leave he ventured further—to Europe and the United States, to Japan and Asia, to Polynesia and so forth. The omission of Africa was corrected when he joined a safari tour in his years of so-called retirement. Back with him from these journeys came funds of stories, scientific, scholarly, aesthetic or simply bizarre. One recalls lively accounts of dog-eating in Tahiti, or dining out on poisonous fish in Tokyo, of Hitler's Berlin in 1937, and many more, less vivid perhaps but no less captivating.

Travel came also through invitations to join scientific expeditions, among the last being an American-Australian venture in the Tasman Sea during 1973. Back in 1928 he had spent three months with the British Great Barrier Reef Expedition led by C. M. (later, Sir Maurice) Yonge. Whitley's report on the fishes of the Low Isles appeared as one of the expedition papers issued by the British Museum (Natural History) in 1932. The 1929 visit of the Danish research vessel *Dana* brought an opportunity to sail as a guest-worker with Professor Johannes Schmidt. Again, in 1951 he worked with Anton Bruun aboard *Galathea*, for which efforts he was awarded a silver medal by the King of Denmark.

Early in 1942, with the approval of the Museum trustees, Gilbert joined the CSIR (now CSIRO) Division of Fisheries to assist in the elucidation of problems relating to edible fish—what and where they are. In a time of war the search for additional sources of food was a matter of priority. The secondment lasted until 1946 and involved much work at sea in Australian and New Guinea waters. His bulletin on *Poisonous and Harmful Fishes*, issued by the CSIR, dates from this period. Further investigations in the New Guinea region occupied another secondment to CSIR in 1948.

Not all his voyages were quite so nicely managed. One in particular, that of April–May 1936, might have ended tragically. Norman Wallis, a Sydney yachtsman, had purchased salvage rights to a wreck on Middleton Reef in the Coral Sea and organised an expedition to inspect the locality, then little known. High seas plagued the voyage and at one stage Wallis and two sailor-companions were washed overboard leaving, in Gilbert's own words, ' a very seasick naturalist for a short time in sole possession of the ship '. His story is woven into an article ' Graveyards of the Pacific ' printed in the *Australian Museum Magazine* for 1936. There, with characteristic relish, he reported that by taking possession of Elizabeth and Middleton Reefs in the name of the Crown, the party had made the first territorial additions to the empire of King Edward VIII !

In July of the year before Gilbert ventured north to the Cumberland Group, off the Queensland coast, in search of the Devil Ray (*Daenomanta alfredi*). The first recorded specimen of this strange creature had been caught in Sydney Harbour in 1868. An anonymous author, whom Whitley identified as Gerard Krefft, sometime Curator of the Australian Museum, described it in local newspapers of the time. The name honoured H.R.H. Prince Alfred who had just escaped assassination here. Gilbert delighted to resurrect such details and to remind his readers of the work done by our forbears. It is beyond estimating the hours he spent at the Mitchell and other libraries poring through files of old newspapers and documents in search of material on Australian natural history and those who contributed to our knowledge and collections. His notes, laboriously copied in longhand in the days before xerox, were ever at the service of enquirers.

This attraction to history is not surprising. After all, he worked in Australia's oldest museum. Robert Etheridge, director from 1895 until 1920, had shown the way. His successor, Charles Anderson, also evinced historical sympathies. Both directors in their historical work were concerned particularly with documentation, with bringing together the facts of historical record, rather than interpretation and method. Such, too, was the preference of Gilbert Whitley and his friends Iredale and Musgrave. Indeed, the trio became dedicated bibliographers. Whitley and Iredale were founder-members (1936) of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History, London, first presided over by that splendid character Dr. C. Davies Sherborn, a fertile influence on the Sydney friends.

Whitley's published bibliographical work consists chiefly in the appendices to his presidential address (*A Survey of Australian Ichthyology*) to this society in 1964 and to his many biographical studies. The choice of subjects for these latter is revealing. They include, of course, friends like Tom Iredale, whom he regarded as the Australian Linnaeus though some may feel that honour should be shared. Others less well-remembered also appear. He enjoyed seeking justice for the underdogs. Gerard Krefft, not generously treated by the trustees of the Australian Museum, is a case in point. John Lhotsky, another naturalist who had more than his share of rough treatment in this country, is another. A monograph on this forgotten visitor, his work and works will appear in 1977 ; to it Gilbert contributed an article and part of the bibliography. If belated credit comes to Lhotsky's reputation it will be in large measure through the efforts of this unmilitant crusader. Nearer the society's interests perhaps is the study and catalogue of our collection of paintings by Dr. James Stuart, a collection now deposited for safe-keeping in the Mitchell Library. That work, by Musgrave, Iredale and Whitley, appeared in the *Australian Zoologist* in 1955.

In addition to these studies of individuals, there are more general historical works that deserve mention. The paper *Some Early Naturalists and Collectors in Australia* issued by the Royal Australian Historical Society (of which he was long a member and for a time a councillor) in its journal for 1933, remains a valuable review. To celebrate Sydney's sesqui-centenary in 1938 came a study on the naturalists of the First Fleet in the *Australian Museum Magazine*. There ten years later appeared his article on some founders of Australian fish science. His last words on the early history of Australian zoology are to be found in two monographs published 1970 and 1975 by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales. The later work is an elaboration of an address delivered on completion of his third term (1973–75) as president of that society, a society whose fellowship (F.R.Z.S.) he had enjoyed since 1934 and which he served as editor for the period 1947–1971.

A history of the Australian Museum, the fruits of his many years' honorary work as Historian and Archivist, remains unpublished. One may hope that in this 150th year of the Museum efforts will be made to bring it out of the shadows, if only in an edited version. Failure to find a sponsor to publish the history had been a disappointment for Gilbert, the more so as the cost of printing was quite beyond his own resources. That must be said for, in fact, many of his works were printed with the aid of handsome subsidies from his own pocket. In the case of his grandfather's African journal (*Nathan Whitley's Journal*, Sydney, 1972) he met the whole cost himself. It is a work, incidentally, expressing something of the close family attachments that remained such a strength to Gilbert. He found riches enough there and with his friends and his work. Never ambitious of worldly wealth, he lived a bachelor in modest but hospitable comfort that left him sufficient means to travel occasionally and for private acts of generosity, not least of which were donations to societies like our own troubled by escalating costs for printing.

That may seem a solemn view of this most un-solemn man. He long enjoyed the unofficial title of Museum Bard, awarded in recognition of his ' Pomes ' composed for special occasions such as a farewell party for a staff member. Many examples survive, characteristically light-hearted pieces full of puns and tortured rhymes, that set up the foibles of their subjects. The compliment was returned, of course. With apologies to W. S. Gilbert, his friend Anthony Musgrave made him ". . . the very model of a modern ichthyologist . . .". Another colleague waxed lyrical in *The Prisoner's Song* celebrating Gilbert's arrest one Sunday in 1939 for (inadvertent) trespass on the military reserve at North Head—while collecting butterflies. Gilbert, in fact, was keenly interested in all the arts. He was a regular concert- and theatre-goer ; he missed few good films and art exhibitions. He had a considerable knowledge of music and found much enjoyment playing the piano.

Gilbert's long connections with our society, with the Royal Zoological Society of N.S.W. and with the Royal Australian Historical Society have been mentioned. Many others will remember him. For a time he served as councillor in the Anthropological Society of N.S.W. and in 1972 was president of the Australian Society of Fish Biology. Work on behalf of ANZAAS and the Australian Great Barrier Reef Committee call for record. He sought no rewards, much preferring to work without fuss, but two major honours came his way—and when they did he alone was surprised. In 1967 there was the Australian Natural History Medallion. Three years later the Royal Society of N.S.W. bestowed on him its Clarke Medal. For that occasion his friend Oliver Chalmers prepared a splendid citation (printed anonymously, *J. Proc. R. Soc. N.S.W.*, 104, 1971, pp. 106–7) giving many details of a long and notable career of service to Australian natural history that are not repeated here. We remember Gilbert Whitley with affection and pride.

" The sweetest canticle is *Nunc Dimittis*, when a man hath achieved worthy ends ".

[Warm thanks are extended to Mrs. Marjorie Frewer, Gilbert's sister, and his friend Mr. R. O. Chalmers for help and advice in the preparation of this memorial.]

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